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Daily Highlights

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WEDNESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Security Council welcomes release of another 108 United Nations peace-keepers by Bosnian Serbs; expects further releases soon.

+ France, Netherlands and United Kingdom propose to put two rapid-deployment brigades at disposal of United Nations in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

+ United Nations considers requesting NATO close air support after Croatian forces target Kenyan peace-keepers in Sector South.

+ Under-Secretary-General Kittani reviews arrangements for Fourth World Conference on Women with Chinese officials in Beijing; expresses optimism regarding question of venue for NGO Forum.

+ Economic and Social Council concludes 1995 organizational session; to transmit draft to General Assembly on transforming WFP Committee on Food Aid into executive board.

+ Subcommittee on Small Territories approves text reaffirming responsibility of administering Powers to promote development of Non-Self-Governing Territories.

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The Security Council today welcomed news that the Bosnian Serbs had released 108 of the United Nations peace-keepers being held hostage in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In a statement to correspondents, Council President Detlev Graf zu Rantzau (Germany) announced that another 120 hostages were expected to be released later today. He added that the Council was looking forward to confirmation of reports to that effect.

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The 108 peace-keepers were released early this morning and then flown from Belgrade to Zagreb, according to a United Nations spokesman. None of the soldiers -- 58 Ukrainians, 32 French, 17 British and one Spaniard -- had been injured. A total of 149 United Nations personnel continued to be detained or blockaded by the Bosnian Serbs, although it was possible that "a few stragglers" had also been released.

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France, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom are prepared to assist the United Nations by putting two international brigades at its disposal in Bosnia and Herzegovina, according to the Under-Secretary-General for Peace-keeping, Kofi Annan. He made that comment to correspondents after meeting with political and military representatives of the three countries on the formation of a rapid-deployment force to help the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR).

Mr. Annan stressed that the proposal would require Security Council approval. It had been shared with other Member States, and Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali was being fully briefed on all developments. If the Council approved the proposal, it would give the UNPROFOR Commander the means to protect his troops and tactical flexibility on the ground. The new force would operate under peace-keeping rules of engagement. It would not be an enforcement operation, but would be an added deterrence, he said.

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United Nations officials yesterday considered calling for North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) close air support after Croatian forces directly targeted peace-keepers in Croatia, according to a spokesman for the Organization. A total of four shells were fired at a Kenyan camp in Sector South, but caused no casualties or major damage. Meanwhile, a Kenyan observation post came under machine-gun fire.

NATO had been prepared to provide close air support, but the attack ended before any formal request was made, the spokesman said. The United Nations sent a strong letter of protest to the Croatian forces following the incident.

In another development, the United Nations today sent a high-level delegation to Belgrade and Pale to discuss the question of deliveries of humanitarian aid and the resupply of peace-keepers in Sarajevo and the Bosnian enclaves. Meanwhile, the Bosnian Serbs

allowed two convoys into Srebrenica and Zepa today. No convoys had reached those areas since 23 May and 18 May respectively.

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Under-Secretary-General Ismat Kittani has had several meetings with senior Chinese officials in Beijing regarding the upcoming Fourth World Conference on Women. The Secretary-General recently asked him to review arrangements for the September Conference with the Chinese Government. Mr. Kittani is Chairman of the High-level Steering Committee for the event.

Mr. Kittani also inspected the Beijing International Convention Centre, which will be the site of the Conference, and visited the proposed venue for the NGO Forum. He expressed optimism that the question of the venue for the Forum would be resolved. He said his goal was to reach an agreement that was satisfactory both to the Chinese Government and to the NGO Organizing Committee.

Tomorrow, Mr. Kittani will meet with Qian Qichen, China's Vice Premier and Foreign Minister of Foreign Affairs. He will deliver a letter from the Secretary-General, and exchange views on the preparations for the Conference.

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The Economic and Social Council has decided to transmit to the General Assembly a draft resolution on transforming the World Food Programme (WFP) Committee on Food Aid Policies and Programmes into an executive board. The Council took that action as it concluded its 1995 organizational session.

By the draft resolution, the Committee would be reconstituted as an executive board with 36 members elected from among the Members of the United Nations or the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). The WFP is an autonomous joint organ of the United Nations and the FAO. The FAO Conference will take up the matter in Rome in November.

The Subcommittee on Small Territories, Petitions, Information and Assistance yesterday concluded its 1995 session. The Subcommittee adopted its report and approved 14 draft resolutions without a vote.

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One of the draft resolutions would have the Special Committee on Decolonization reaffirm the responsibility of the administering Powers of 12 Non-Self-Governing Territories to promote their economic and social development. Twelve drafts addressed, respectively, specific conditions prevailing in those Territories. Another draft resolution dealt with the dissemination of information on decolonization.

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